



# The Augur

Journal of the Biblical Numismatic Society  
9301 Wilshire Boulevard, Beverly Hills, California 90210-5499

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## ON THE SHAPE OF THE FOOT OF THE MENORAH

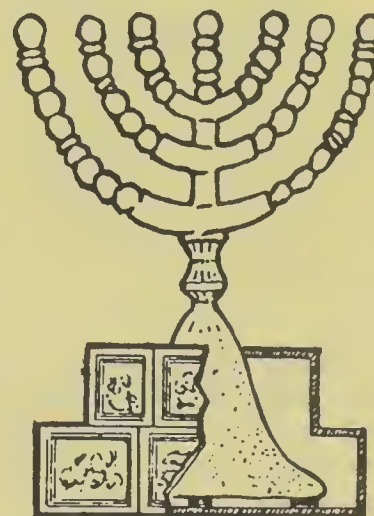
by Wolf Wirgin

In a paper published in 1961 by H. Strauss about the *Menorah of the Hasmoneans*, the author suggests, in view of the difference in shape of the bases of the *menorah* (seven-branched candlestick) on the coin of King Antigonus and that on the arch of Titus, that neither of the two represents the original *menorah*; he is in favour of a three legged base similar to that of some *menorot* on later stone carvings.

The problem of such a discrepancy between two representations, both contemporary with the original, can in my opinion not be solved by trying to trace the original shape back from later examples, but by attempting to reconcile the discrepancy. I believe that both the picture on the coin and that on the arch are true depictions of the actual object, even though there are fewer details on the coin than on the arch because of the numismatic convention that reduces shapes to a bare minimum of outline.



I see in the pedestal of the *menorah* on the arch of Titus not its actual base, but a box-like screen made to cover it. The base itself was hidden under the hexagonal screen and probably conformed with design on the coin of Antigonus. Fig. 1 shows how the box could be fitted over the lower part of the *menorah*. In order to understand why it looks like a podium with two steps, we assume that it was constructed from panels made for other purposes, for instance for the manufacture of incense boxes. Roman sculpture contains many representations of incense boxes decorated with designs similar to those on the pedestal around the *menorah*. It was easy to build a hexagonal screen like this by joining a number of such decorated panels.



It is obvious why some such kind of contrivance was necessary: the *menorah*, if placed on the platform of the stretcher to be carried high on the shoulders of the marchers, would be in constant danger of falling during the parade, for the stretcher swayed in all directions as the bearers walked. To secure the *menorah* with ropes would certainly have been unsightly. In accordance with the solemnity of the occasion an appropriate dress-up and display was therefore invented. It appears that the box was constructed in two halves to fit the base of the *menorah* closely. It could be easily attached at the bottom to the platform of the stretcher.





Menorah, depicted  
on bronze lepton  
issued by Antigonus  
Mattathias (40–37 A.D.)



Basin (chalice)  
with pedestal and  
feet on silver Shekel  
(66–70 A.D.)

As mentioned above, the *menorah* is depicted in later times with a base resting on three feet, and one may question whether the *menorah* in the Temple was constructed likewise. According to tradition the Temple *menorah* did have three feet, although not necessarily animal's, or more specifically lion's feet. We should like to call attention to the feet of the basin on the Jewish 'thick' *shekels* in their later issues (not in the first issue). There the pedestal of the basin is similar to the pedestal of the *menorah*, but it has a small support at each end. The pedestal of the basin was surely circular and therefore must have had a third foot to support it, but this foot could not be included by the engraver in his design. Fig. 2 shows a view of the *menorah* seen from below with its three supporting feet, in accordance with the representation of the basin on the *shekels*, and the Roman box around it.



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Although this hypothesis is built largely on conjecture, it has the advantage of being based on archaeological evidence from the period when the *menorah* could still be seen by the coin engraver and by the sculptor who depicted it. Both of them gave as true a picture as they were able to.

Reprinted from the *Israel Exploration Journal*, Volume II, No. 3, 1961 with permission of the author. ■

#### COMING SOON IN THE AUGUR:

A major article by Mel Wacks disputing the determination by Rev. Files that a coin of Pontius Pilate can be seen in the eye area of the Shroud of Turin.

## CAESAREA . . . FROM STRATO'S TOWER TO COLONIA PRIMA

by Mel Wacks

Alexander Jannaeus conquered the coastal town of Strato's Tower at the beginning of the First Century B.C., incorporating it into the Hasmonean Kingdom. (The town's name was derived from its founder, King Strato of Sidon, who built the harbor three centuries earlier.) In 63 B.C. Pompey liberated Strato's Tower along with other Palestinian coastal cities, placing them under the Roman Pro-consul of Syria.

After the Battle of Actium in 31 B.C., the Roman Emperor Augustus bestowed the coastal region including Strato's Tower on Herod the Great. King Herod, who restored the great Temple in Jerusalem to its former glory, chose Strato's Tower as the site for a major harbor to serve his Jewish kingdom.



Herod the Great's Kingdom

The famous Jewish-Roman historian Josephus, who lived in the harbor-city just a few generations after its refounding by Herod, wrote: "Notwithstanding the recalcitrant nature of the site, by dint of expenditure and enterprise, the King triumphed over nature and grappled with the difficulties so successfully that the solidity of his masonry defied the sea." In addition, Herod also built a great number of public buildings, a Temple of Augustus and Rome facing the harbor, an amphitheater, etc. This con-



struction required 12 years for completion. The new city was inaugurated as Caesarea in 13 B.C. amid much public rejoicing; it was named by Herod for the Roman Emperor Caesar Augustus who was then celebrating his 50th birthday.

Caesarea, along with the rest of Judaea, passed into the hands of Archelaus following the death of his father, Herod the Great, in 4 B.C. Ten years later the Romans deposed Archelaus and installed the first of a series of Roman Procurators as governors of Judaea. It remained under Roman control for the next 600 years . . . except for a very brief period (37–44 A.D.) when Herod Agrippa I ruled.

Perhaps it was during the Roman period that the first coins were struck in Caesarea . . . small bronzes featuring an inverted anchor on one side along with the date ΛΙΔ (the 11th year); the reverse shows a rudderblade and the Greek inscription ΚΑΙΣΑΡΕΩΝ. As late as 1914, Hill attributed this coin and similar pieces to Caesarea. However in Kadman's monumental work "The Coins of Caesarea Maritime" these quasi-autonomous bronzes were excluded as a matter of caution. Kadman gives two reasons for this action, writing that the anchor and rudder never appear on coins assigned with certainty to our Caesarea and, the legend ΚΑΙΣΑΡΕΩΝ occurs only twice on coins of Caesarea. According to Head's *Historia Numorum* (1911), there was a grand total of at least six ancient cities named Caesarea that minted coins!



Coin attributed by Hill (1914) to Caesara, but excluded by Kadman (1957).

The first coins definitely attributable to the Caesarea mint were issued by Herod Agrippa I in 43–45 A.D. This was to be expected, since King Agrippa spent much of his time at the royal palace in Caesarea during his short reign. His coins have identical reverse inscriptions naming the mint: "ΚΑΙΣΑΡΙΑ ΗΠΙΡΟC ΤΩ CΕΒΑCΤΩ ΛΙΜΕΝΙ." The obverses feature portraits of Agrippa, and the similar reverses show a female figure holding a rudder and palm branch. However, Kadman indicates that "even though they were struck in Caesarea, these coins belong to Agrippa I and not to that of Caesaréa."



First coin struck at Caesarea, according to Kadman, by Herod Agrippa I, c. 43–45 A.D.

Thus, the first coins struck under the auspices of the city of Caesarea were issued in the 14th year of Nero's rule (67/68 A.D.), during the First Revolt of Judaea. Some of these coins have backwards legends, indicating inexperienced mint workers just beginning to learn their craft. These bronze coins naturally feature the Emperor's bust, with a star in front; the reverses show the city goddess Tyche standing along with the name of the mint and date. Tyche holds a bust of the emperor, her foot rests on the prow of a ship, and a river god swims below. (See The Augur No. 24 1979), "The Harbour God of Caesarea Maritime," pp. 93–94, for a full discussion of this coin type.)



First city issue of Caesarea, issued under Nero, 67/68 A.D., in the second year of the First Revolt.

It was a dispute between the Jewish and Gentile citizens of Caesarea that ignited the First Revolt in 66 A.D. While previously the two groups had managed to live in peace, friction and even bloody encounters erupted in a struggle for control following Agrippa's sudden death (see Acts 12: 19–23). The Procurator Felix resolved to solve the problem by sending delegations of the two feuding parties to Rome in order that the question be resolved by the Emperor himself. As reported by the historian Josephus, Nero decided in favor of the Gentiles as a result of a bribe to his imperial secretary Burrus.

The Jews were shocked by this decision. Josephus indicates that "the moment when the Gentile delegation returned to Caesarea with Nero's decision marks the beginning of the Jewish war." Many Jews left the city and the rest almost 20,000 were massacred on the day that the news arrived that the Roman garrison in Jerusalem had succumbed to the revolutionaries. For the balance of the revolt (66–70 A.D.), Caesarea was the main base of Roman operations. While General Vespasian was headquartered there during the winter of 67–68 A.D., the first imperial coins were struck at the Caesarea mint.



Tiny bronze coins (minima) thought by Meshorer to have been minted at Caesarea during the First Revolt.



by Robert D. Leonard Jr.

There is an interesting series of crudely made tiny bronze coins, called minima by Kadman, half perutot by Meshorer, that resemble the bronze prutahs struck at Jerusalem by the Jews during the second and third years (67/68 and 68/69 A.D.) of the First Revolt. It has been generally contended by experts ranging from H. Hamberger (Minute Coins from Caesarea, Atiqot, 1954, pp. 115–138) to Ya'akov Meshorer (Jewish Coins in the Second Temple Period, 1967) that "these minute half perutot all emanate from Caesarea, for all the coins of this type which we have been able to trace were found there. Hence we assume that they were minted at Caesarea and intended for local use only." However, considering the absence of Jews and the overwhelming presence of the Roman legions, it seems most unlikely that Jewish revolutionary coins would have been minted at Caesarea at any time during this chaotic period.

Following the destruction of the Temple at Jerusalem (70 A.D.) and the end of the revolt, Titus led his victorious legions back to Caesarea Maritima along with the spoils (i.e. gold Temple Menorah, Table of Shewbread, etc.) and the Jewish prisoners. Titus celebrated his triumph with so-called "games" where over 2500 Jewish captives perished at the stake or in gladiatorial and wild beast combats.

The Romans made Caesarea the capital of the Province of Judaea, and the city became the first Roman colony to be named by the Flavian Emperors . . . hence the new name of Colonia Prima Flavia Augusta Caesarea. The Roman historian Tacitus indicates that the city was also called Judaea Caput, and thus it was appropriate that the Judaea Capta coins with Greek legends were struck there by Vespasian and Titus. (The Judaea Capta coins with Latin inscriptions were mostly minted in Rome.) Kadman writes that "it seems not unreasonable to suggest that the IOY AIA EA WKYIA series, minted in Caesarea, was issued by the imperial authorities as a provincial substitute for the local coinage."

During the reigns of Vespasian (69–79 A.D.) and his son Titus (79–81 A.D.) no other coins were minted at Caesarea other than the Greek Judaea Capta types. Imperial coins were subsequently minted there until the time of Volusianus (254 A.D.). ■



Typical Judaea Capta (Greek inscriptions) types struck in Caesarea.



Other coins of Domitian struck in Caesarea.

In Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians, Chapter 11, verses 32 and 33, Paul writes, "When I was in Damascus, the ethnarch of King Aretas put guards round the city to catch me, and I had to be let down over the wall in a hamper, through a window, in order to escape." (Jerusalem Bible, 1966). This King Aretas is Aretas IV of Nabataea, 9 B.C.—A.D. 40. Most maps of the Holy Land in the time of Jesus do not show Nabataean territory extending to Damascus, but from this passage it is believed that Aretas IV gained control of the city for a time. It may have been a gift of the Roman emperor Caligula, A.D. 37–41. The son of Aretas, Malichus II (A.D. 40–71), lost control of Damascus itself (it was reannexed by Nero, A.D. 54–68), though he retained territory to the east and southeast of it. The main Nabataean territory, of course, was southeast of Judaea, from the Negev to the eastern border of Auranitis and Trachonitis in southern Syria. Its capital was Petra, the ruins of which may still be seen in Jordan.

The coins of Aretas IV all have his portrait on the obverse, either alone or as jugate busts of Aretas and his queen Shaqilat I (A.D. 9–40). On the reverse of a silver drachm appears a bust of queen Huldu (9 B.C.—A.D.7). The reverse of the bronze coins shows two cornucopiae crossed, like those on the coins of the Hasmonaeen and Herodian dynasties from Alexander Jannaeus (103–76 B.C.), to Agrippa II (A.D. 56–95), plus coins of the procurator Valerius Gratus (A.D. 15–26), however, on the earlier Judaeen coins (through Herod Archelaus, 4 B.C.—A.D.6), the cornucopiae, though double, are not crossed. These bronze coins resemble Judaeen bronzes in size also, as they are about the same diameter as the roughly contemporary issues of Agrippa I of year 6 (A.D. 42/3), about 18 mm, but the Nabataean issues are thicker and heavier. A final point of similarity is inscription; late Nabataean coins have legends in Nabataean, which was very close to Aramaic—indeed, ancient papyri show that many Judaeans were completely conversant with the Nabataean language and script. For example, the Nabataean word for king, *mlk*, is nearly identical to the Hebrew *melek*, and the last letter, *chaf*, is written the same on both Hasmonaeen and Nabataean coins.

The reverse of a bronze coin of Aretas IV and Shaqilat I is shown on the Avdat Coin-Medal of Israel, part of the City Coin-Medals series of 1965–66 (Haffner M–42, Kagan CCM–5, Wacks 105). The names Aretas and Shaqilat are plainly readable on this inexpensive medal. But the original coin with a portrait of Aretas IV as well is not expensive either; an average specimen would be worth about \$25–45 today. So an ordinary collector can aspire to own a coin like those probably circulating in Damascus at the time of Paul's narrow escape from the ethnarch of King Aretas. ■

